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"The Road to Stalin": Mandelstam's Ode to Stalin and "The Lines on the Unknown Soldier"

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Abstract

"The Road to Stalin" introduces new translations of two late poems by Osip Mandelstam: the Ode to Stalin and the "Lines on the Unknown Soldier." The poems were written in 1937 toward the end of Mandelstam's exile in Voronezh. Both were intended for publication. In recent years, "The Unknown Soldier" has been acknowledged as one of Mandelstam's major works. The Ode, for the most part, has been treated as an embarrassment. If publication had occurred at the time, however, the two poems would have been read in each other's terms—as complementary works by a poet whose dissent, arrest, and exile were celebrated. In publishing these translations together, our primary intention is also a very simple one, to offer a way in which the two poems can be read as companions.



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